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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Interior Ministry U/S on Aviation Security,
Diplomatic Security and the Bedoian Case

Ref: Ankara 1989

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1. (SBU) In an April 21 meeting with Interior Ministry Undersecretary Harput, DCM raised the continuing gap in border controls for international passengers transferring to domestic flights, police protection for the U.S. Consul General in Istanbul, and the Bedoian investment case. Mustafa Bal, head of the Turkish National Police (TNP) Protection Department, Econoff and RSO FSN Investigator also attended.

2. (SBU) DCM pointed out that, until international passengers are required to clear customs and border control at the initial point of entry to Turkey, there is a risk that terrorists or criminals will enter the country undetected using commercial airlines. Harput responded that the GOT had decided to implement control at the first port of entry (usually Istanbul), but that physical adjustments were necessary, and that these might not be completed until August 2004. Note: Turkish authorities have given various estimates of the time needed to complete this project, some of which extend into 2005. End Note. DCM emphasized that this loophole in border control is of particular concern in the runup to the June NATO Summit, and urged Harput to accelerate work to eliminate this risk. Harput described extensive security plans for the Summit, but agreed to look into this matter with other members of the GOT's Summit security coordination committee. The DCM also noted that lack of a visa requirement for Iranians also poses some concerns with respect to the Summit. In a followup conversation with Econoff on May 4, Turgay Sahan, head of the TNP Airport Division, told us that GOT agencies would meet to discuss this problem further on May 7. One option under consideration is the use of color-coded boarding cards to control transit passengers.

3. (SBU) The DCM also raised a Mission request to restore a police follow car for our CG in Istanbul. Harput responded that the issue would probably be discussed in the Istanbul Governor's protection committee that same day. Harput offered to discuss the matter with the Istanbul Governor, and invited the DCM to raise the issue again with the Interior Ministry if our concerns were not resolved.

4. (SBU) DCM also raised the case of Victor and Kristy Bedoian's investment in a Van hotel, and their administrative court cases concerning residence and operating permits for the facility. He noted that the Bedoians were also engaged in litigation with private parties over the sale of the property. DCM expressed the hope that, once the private court case is decided, the authorities would help promote foreign investment by ensuring fair treatment for the Bedoians on various permit issues related to the hotel. Harput agreed on the importance of eliminating discrimination against foreigners, and encouraged us to contact him if there were any further problems in this case.
Edelman